

Pray the Bible while you read the Bible Psalm 3 FBC Canton Sunday am January 25, 2026

Introduction: Reading will flow into praying.

End aimlessness, begin focus

End boredom, begin strategy

End repetition, begin making sense

Become confident you are praying God's will.

Become certain of what the bible really says.

Become effective availing much.

Become consistent over time.

God gives us prayer Psalms when the trials of life come.

God allows trials in our lives to work His good purposes. Romans 8:28



**As children of a sovereign
God, we are never victims
of our circumstances.**

Charles F. Stanley

quoteancy

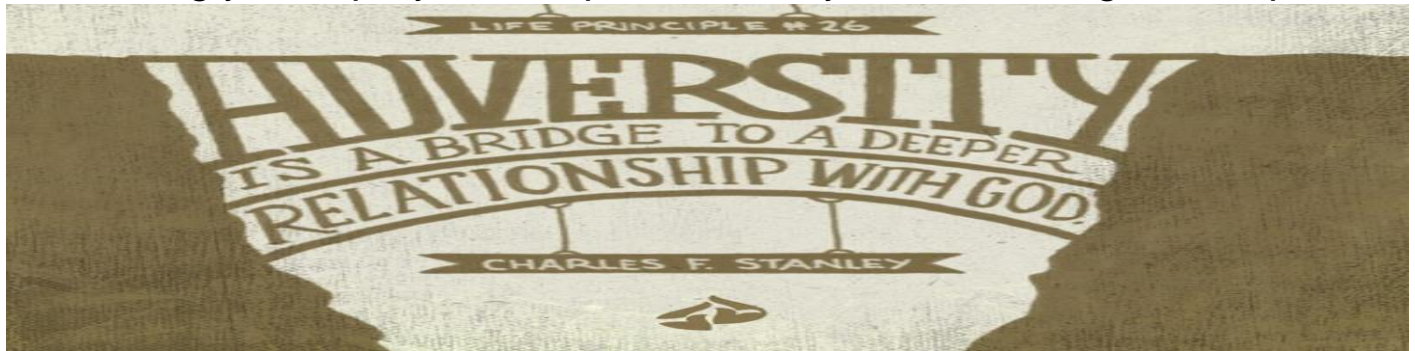
That means we are not allowed to remain in bitterness, unforgiveness and say inside ourselves there is no power to deal with these problems forced upon me

We have to come out of that thought and believe God raises people from victims to victors!

David's life that lead to this trial:

- 1. Fallen flesh: Self-inflicted, forgiven yet retains consequences. Psalm 51**
 - a. Self-focused individuals are always accountable for their sin=Absalom.**
- 2. Fallen enemy: Satan-induced, desiring to destroy the family by dishonoring parents. John 10:10**
- 3. Fallen world: Things wear out. I John 2:15-17**

I am calling you to pray the scriptures while you are reading the scriptures.



- I. What is in your life that has led to your trials? V.1-2**
 - a. Many rise up to talk down your dependence on God. Proverbs 3:5-6**
- II. Contrast to the many is the 1 True God. V. 3-4 Stop here, believe that God is good even when all is difficult around you, even if you don't feel it...he is working.**
 - a. 3 gracious character traits to depend upon:**
 - i. Shield, not just from something, but through something.**

God protects. David says, "But you, O LORD, are a shield about me." A shield is a defensive weapon. If you have a shield, you're able to deflect the attacks of the enemy. Soldiers would hold a small round shield, big enough to provide protection but small enough to allow movement. But David goes even further. He says that the LORD is a shield about him, not just in front of him, but all around him. David says that God is his complete protection. When we're under attack, we can remind ourselves that God is our protection. He is our shield.

- ii. Glory; when He is your glory, no one can take it.**

God is enough. David says that God is his "glory". What does it mean that God is his glory? David was king. Kings had a glory that nobody else had. They had public dignity, recognition, honor. But now David was on the run, and he had lost his glory. Actually, David says, he hadn't. He had temporarily lost almost everything, but he never lost his glory, because God, David says, is his glory. We all get meaning from something in life. You can lose your career.

You can lose popularity and acclaim. If you get glory from anything other than God, you can and will lose your glory. David says that God is his glory. He's lost the glory of his kingdom to Absalom, but he has all the glory that he needs in God himself

iii. Lifts up; not just once.

God restores. David says that God is the "lifter of his head". You don't need this one explained. You know what it means to hang your head. In war, those who were conquered would lay on the ground while the conquerors put a foot on their necks. David says that God has lifted his head again. God has a way of restoring his people even in the middle of impossible situations.

b. Cry out to his character for he always hears.

i. Unconfessed sin is the only thing that will keep him from hearing. I John 1:9-10, Psalm 66:18

III. You know you have moved from worry to concern. V. 5-6, Philippians 4:4-9

a. When your mind begins to rest. Matthew 11:28-30

b. When you remember he has sustained you again.

i. 10000 is no match for the 1 True God.

IV. Prayer becomes action when faith is kindled. V. 7-8, Hebrews 11:6

a. Act now, on me!

b. Deliver me, from me!

i. Break the Lion's hold on me. I Peter 5:7

c. The Lord possesses rescue=singular focus. 2 Sam 22:47

47 "The LORD lives! Blessed be my Rock! Let God be exalted, The Rock of my salvation!

d. Blessings of his presence even if...Daniel 3

Conclusion: Pray the Psalm with me.

Jamieson, Fausset & Brown

Commentary on Psalm 3

The Book of Psalms

Commentary by A. R. FAUSSET

PSALM 3

[Psa 3:1-8](#). For the historical occasion mentioned, compare [2Sa 15:1 - 17:29](#). David, in the midst of great distress, with filial confidence, implores God's aid, and, anticipating relief, offers praise.

1. Lord. . . increased--The extent of the rebellion ([2Sa 15:13](#)) surprises and grieves him.

2. say of my soul--that is, "of me" (compare [Psa 25:3](#)). This use of "soul" is common; perhaps it arose from regarding the soul as man's chief part.

no help. . . in God--rejected by Him. This is the bitterest reproach for a pious man, and denotes a spirit of malignant triumph.

Selah--This word is of very obscure meaning. It probably denotes *rest* or *pause*, both as to the music and singing, intimating something emphatic in the sentiment (compare [Psa 9:16](#)).

3. But--literally, "and" ([Psa 2:6](#)). He repels the reproach by avowing his continued trust.

shield--a favorite and often-used figure for protection.

my glory--its source.

lifter up of mine head--one who raises me from despondency.

4. cried. . . heard--Such has been my experience. The latter verb denotes a gracious hearing or answering.

out of--or, "from."

his holy hill--Zion ([Psa 2:6](#)). His visible earthly residence.

5. the Lord sustained me--literally, "will sustain me," the reason of his composure.

6. ten thousands of people--or, "myriads," any very great number (compare [2Sa 16:18](#)).

7. Arise, O Lord--God is figuratively represented as asleep to denote His apparent indifference ([Psa 7:6](#)). The use of "*cheekbone*" and "*teeth*" represents his enemies as fierce, like wild beasts ready to devour ([Psa 27:2](#)), and smiting their cheekbone ([1Ki 22:24](#)) denotes violence and insult.

thou hast broken--God took his part, utterly depriving the enemy of power to injure.

8. an ascription of praise to a delivering God, whose favor is an efficient benefit.

A Prayer When Facing Enemies (Psalm 3)

This morning I want you to take a moment and to think of the darkest moment you've ever experienced in your life. This isn't something that I ask you to do lightly. For some of us it's very painful to even think about. Some examples:

- a period of depression
- the end of a relationship with someone – a spouse, a parent, a close friend
- the loss of a job
- a financial crisis
- the death of someone close to you
- a betrayal
- the news that someone close to you is going through a crisis of their own – a divorce, a depression, or a significant health crisis

Now let me ask you: how many songs did you have to sing during this period of crisis? I've noticed that there are some songs that you can sing in some periods of crisis. I actually have some songs in my iTunes library that are perfect for almost any kind of mood. There are good breakup songs, good angry songs, good sad songs. There are hymns that bring us comfort. Sometimes there is a song that we can sing that can be a big help to us when we're going through a crisis.

But sometimes there aren't songs that can do justice to the depth and severity of a crisis. This is especially true in church. If you flip through our hymnbook, or go online to read the lyrics to many of the songs we sing, you will find songs on almost any topic, but you won't find many that give voice to hearts that are in severe pain. This is a problem, because we need songs that we can sing when we're in crisis. We need songs and words that give voice to our pain, especially in the darkest moments of our lives.

That's where the Psalms come in. We have all kinds of psalms in the Bible. We have psalms of praise and thanksgiving that point to who God is and the wonderful things that he's done. But that isn't all of life. "Life is not all cool breezes and beautiful birds" (George Guthrie). So there are other kinds of psalms, including the psalm we're looking at this morning. It's a psalm of lament. David Howard, a professor of Old Testament, says:

Laments are the psalms where David or the other psalmists are pouring out their hearts to God, being honest about the fact that life, at times, stinks! The psalmist has just experienced some trouble, sickness, or the persecution of enemies. He may have some people who hate him. I think the church is greatly impoverished because we don't mine the lament psalms for truths that are there and the way they can open up new avenues of approaching God in times of great stress and sadness in our lives.

So let's look at this psalm of lament, because you're going to need it. You may not need it today, but you're going to need it soon enough. I want to set up this psalm for you before we look at exactly what David says in this psalm as he goes through a very difficult period in his life.

So here's a little bit about this psalm. I've mentioned that Psalm 1 and 2 are kind of gateway psalms. They set up the rest of the collection of psalms for us. Psalm 1 asks us to examine our lives to make sure that we're part of the congregation of the righteous. Psalm 2 gives us a macro view of what's going on in the world, and what God is doing about it. Now we get past the gateway and right into the psalms, and notice what happens. I love what Dale Ralph Davis has written:

You first go through the double doors of the Psalter – Psalms 1 tells you to settle your commitment and Psalm 2 to get a clear view of the kingdom. Then what? You walk into trouble (Psalm 3).

That tells you something, doesn't it? It doesn't take very long in the psalms or in life before we find ourselves neck-deep in trouble. That's the nature of the world, and the psalms are very honest about it.

If you look at the top of the psalm, you find that this is one of 14 psalms that are directly linked to an event in David's life. It says: "A psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son." A little bit of background: 2 Samuel 15 and 16 tells of the time when David's own son rose up against him and stole his father's throne. Absalom became immensely more popular than David, and David had to flee for his life. David's trusted counselor turned against him. He was brutally mocked and everything was taken away from him. It's hard to picture a worse moment in David's life. Not only did he lose everything, but his own son betrayed him. [2 Samuel 15:12](#) says, "And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing."

This is why this is important to us. This psalm gives us a model for how we can pray to God when we are going through the darkest moments of our lives. In this psalm, David is going to give voice to his desperate situation. Then he's going to show us two things that we can turn to to help us in our darkest moments.

David shows us how to give voice to our suffering.

In verses 1 to 2, David describes his situation honestly to God. He doesn't pretend that things are okay. There's no need to pretend with God, by the way. God isn't dishonored by our honest admission that things aren't okay. Sometimes Christians have the crazy idea that we

have to pretend with God. The psalms teach us the importance of being brutally honest with God about the situation we're facing. They teach us that it's okay to come before God and to be honest about our struggles.

Listen to what David writes:

O LORD, how many are my foes!

Many are rising against me;

many are saying of my soul,

there is no salvation for him in God. Selah

So here's the brutal situation David faces: an abundance of enemies who are rising up against him. Not only does he have a bunch of enemies, but they say that God has no interest in saving him. Remember that this is God's anointed king. They are saying that God has turned his back on David. You can see why they said this. It sure looked like it. God had anointed David as king, but now it looked as if God had turned his back on David, and the enemies against him were accumulating. They're moving in for the kill, and they believe that God has abandoned him.

We need to see what David does here. For all intents it looks like God has abandoned David. But David turns directly to the God who supposedly has abandoned him. He doesn't gloss over his troubles. He pours out his heart to God. "Prayer is the way we slog our way through troubles" (Dale Ralph Davis).

Here is one of the most important lessons from the Psalms. Philip Yancey writes of a Catholic sister who counsels troubled women. They're displaced homemakers, abused wives, women returning from college after years away. They're going through anger and hurt. Some spiritual counselors tell them, "Bear it up; keep smiling; suffering makes you strong." But not the psalms. The Psalms teach them how to express the rage that some try to repress.

They do not rationalize anger away or give abstract advice about pain; rather, they express emotions vividly and loudly, directing their feelings primarily about God. The 150 psalms present a mosaic of spiritual therapy in the process. Doubt, paranoia, giddiness, meanness, delight, hatred, joy, praise, vengeance, betrayal – you find it all in the Psalms. Such stewing of emotions, which I once saw as hopeless disarray, I now see as a sign of health. From Psalms I have learned that I can rightfully bring to God whatever I feel about him. I need not paper over my own failures and try to clean up my own rottenness; far better to bring those weaknesses to God, who alone has the power to heal. (*The Bible Jesus Read*)

David shows us in this psalm, as he does in many others, how to give voice to our suffering. He honestly describes in verses 1 to 2 that he has a growing number of enemies, and that it

looks to almost everyone that God has turned his back. David teaches us that we can be honest with God about the troubles that we're facing.

But then David shows us that there are two things about God that we can rely on even in the middle of our suffering.

The first thing about God we need to know in the middle of suffering is that God has not abandoned us.

Do you remember the way that David's enemies saw things? "There is no salvation for him in God," they said in verse 2. Well, David knows otherwise. David knew better than to think that God had abandoned him. He says in verses 3-6:

But you, O LORD, are a shield about me,
my glory, and the lifter of my head.
I cried aloud to the LORD,
and he answered me from his holy hill. Selah
I lay down and slept;
I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.
I will not be afraid of many thousands of people
who have set themselves against me all around.

Here David demonstrates something that we need to do if we're going to survive our problems. The person who put it best is Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in his book [*Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*](#):

Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them but they are talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you...The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself...You must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world..That is the essence of the treatment in a nutshell.

That's exactly what David does. We have emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. We don't have direct control over our emotions, but we do have control over our thoughts and behaviors. What David does here is to honestly acknowledge his emotions, but then to begin to work on

what he knows to be true. He reminds himself of God. Specifically, he reminds himself about four things about God and his character.

God protects. David says, "But you, O LORD, are a shield about me." A shield is a defensive weapon. If you have a shield, you're able to deflect the attacks of the enemy. Soldiers would hold a small round shield, big enough to provide protection but small enough to allow movement. But David goes even further. He says that the LORD is a shield about him, not just in front of him, but all around him. David says that God is his complete protection. When we're under attack, we can remind ourselves that God is our protection. He is our shield.

God is enough. David says that God is his "glory". What does it mean that God is his glory? David was king. Kings had a glory that nobody else had. They had public dignity, recognition, honor. But now David was on the run, and he had lost his glory. Actually, David says, he hadn't. He had temporarily lost almost everything, but he never lost his glory, because God, David says, is his glory. We all get meaning from something in life. You can lose your career. You can lose popularity and acclaim. If you get glory from anything other than God, you can and will lose your glory. David says that God is his glory. He's lost the glory of his kingdom to Absalom, but he has all the glory that he needs in God himself.

God restores. David says that God is the "lifter of his head". You don't need this one explained. You know what it means to hang your head. In war, those who were conquered would lay on the ground while the conquerors put a foot on their necks. David says that God has lifted his head again. God has a way of restoring his people even in the middle of impossible situations.

Finally, God is accessible. God answers from his holy hill. David had fled Jerusalem. He'd left the site of the tabernacle. He couldn't go there to pray and to ask God for help. But David says that his prayers get to God's holy hill just fine even though he can't be there. God hears prayers even when we're nowhere near church. God is accessible no matter where we are.

This is a picture of God that can help us in the middle of life's difficulties. God protects. God is enough even when we lose everything. God restores. And God is accessible. He's present to help no matter where we are or what we're going through.

What's significant is what happened to David as he remembered all of this. Read verses 5 and 6 again.

I lay down and slept;

I woke again, for the LORD sustained me.

I will not be afraid of many thousands of people
who have set themselves against me all around.

Nothing had changed in this situation. Absalom was still out to get him. He was still surrounded by enemies. They still thought they had him beat. David was still in the middle of a huge mess. But in the middle of that mess David said, "I know my God." We can experience the same thing. We can continue in the middle of our mess and still look at thousands of our enemies and sleep well at night because we know who God is, and that he is in control. David reminds us that God has not abandoned us in the middle of the mess, and that makes all the difference.

There's one more thing:

The second thing about God we need to know in the middle of suffering is that God will set things right.

Do you know the problem when enemies rise up against us? It often looks like they're getting away with it. As David wrote this psalm, Absalom was still increasing in popularity. It still looked bad for David. If you asked David for his plan for how we was going to get his kingdom back, he didn't have a plan. It often looks like this. Someone steals from us; we don't have a hope of getting that money back. Someone slanders us; they will probably never apologize. Someone betrays us; they often seem to get away with it.

But David sees past the immediate. Look at what he says in verses 7 and 8:

Arise, O LORD!

Save me, O my God!

For you strike all my enemies on the cheek;

you break the teeth of the wicked.

Salvation belongs to the LORD;

your blessing be on your people! Selah

This sounds harsh at first. But it's so important that we need to pay careful attention to this. Do you know what happens when there's no justice, when nobody puts a stop to evil? People take things into their own hands. Vigilante justice. The only way that this is prevented is if we know that there is justice, and that evil will be stopped, and those perpetrating the evil will be held accountable.

Here David says that he knows he doesn't have to take things into his own hand. Why? Because he knows that God will look after it. David knows that God will take care of all of David's enemies. Because of this, David is free from having to take matters into his own hands. He leaves the vengeance to God.

One website says this about those who wrong you:

1. Get mad....then get even. It's justice, plain and simple.
2. Revenge is healthy. Don't listen to those mealymouths who tell you otherwise. You're teaching people to behave better. At the same time you're getting icky poisonous feelings out of your system once and for all. What could be healthier?
4. Revenge is excellent self-therapy. It's far cheaper than a therapist and much healthier than pigging out on a box of donuts.
6. Always aim your revenge where it hurts the most. Go right for the jugular.
7. Let your creativity blossom. Don't go for cliches like slashing tires. Yawn. Be original. Enjoy yourself. Give your mark an experience they'll never ever forget.
9. If you have to do something you're not proud of, be sure to cover your tracks well.

David wouldn't approve of this list, and the Bible doesn't either. Paul writes in [Romans 12:19](#), "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" Do you see that? The reason we don't have to get revenge is because God will repay. As someone's said it, "A soft view on hell makes hard people." When Bonhoeffer was imprisoned by the Nazis, and shortly before he was hung, someone asked him how it was possible to feel love for such evil people. Bonhoeffer replied, "It is only when God's wrath and vengeance are hanging as grim realities over the heads of one's enemies that something of what it means to love and forgive them can touch our hearts."

Let's review. We need songs that give voice to our troubles. The psalms help us learn that we can be honest with God even in the middle of our difficulties. This is so important. We need to learn the lessons of these psalms.

This morning you're invited to come to God just as you are, and to lay out what you're going through before him. God can handle your honesty. But also gave the courage to preach to yourself. Remind yourself of who God is. Most of all, remind yourself of who you are in Christ. You have a Savior who died to save you, to make you right with God. Remind you that if you have trusted in Christ, you've been adopted. You are now God's own child. You never have to worry about God abandoning you. He has said that he will never leave you and forsake you.

Then see that God is a God who judges. You don't have to judge your enemies, because God will do a better job of judging evil than we ever could. But look to the cross and see that this is where perfect justice and mercy meet, where God repays evil, but where forgiveness is extended to all those who want it.

When facing a crisis, turn to God who has your back and who saves you from your enemies. Let's pray.



Darryl Dash

I'm a grateful husband, father, oupa, and pastor of Grace Fellowship Church East Toronto. I love learning, writing, and encouraging. I'm on a lifelong quest to become a humble, gracious old man.

Matthew Henry Commentary on Psalms 3

Psalm 3

As the foregoing psalm, in the type of David in preferment, showed us the royal dignity of the Redeemer, so this, by the example of David in distress, shows us the peace and holy security of the redeemed, how safe they really are, and think themselves to be, under the divine protection. David, being now driven out from his palace, from the royal city, from the holy city, by his rebellious son Absalom,

- I. Complains to God of his enemies ([v. 1, 2](#)).
- II. Confides in God, and encourages himself in him as his God, notwithstanding ([v. 3](#)).
- III. Recollects the satisfaction he had in the gracious answers God gave to his prayers, and his experience of his goodness to him ([v. 4, 5](#)).
- IV. Triumphs over his fears ([v. 6](#)) and over his enemies, whom he prays against, ([v. 7](#)).
- V. Gives God the glory and takes to himself the comfort of the divine blessing and salvation which are sure to all the people of God ([v. 8](#)).

Those speak best of the truths of God who speak experimentally; so David here speaks of the power and goodness of God, and of the safety and tranquility of the godly.

A psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son.

[Psa 3:1-3](#)

The title of this psalm and many others is as a key hung ready at the door, to open it, and let us into the entertainments of it; when we know upon what occasion a psalm was penned we know the better how to expound it. This was composed, or at least the substance of it was meditated and digested in David's thought, and offered up to God, when he fled from Absalom his son, who formed a conspiracy against him, to take away, not his crown only, but his life; we have the story, [2 Sa. 15](#), etc.

- 1. David was now in great grief; when, in his flight, he went up the Mount of Olives, he wept greatly, with his head covered, and marching bare-foot; yet then he composed this comfortable psalm. He wept and prayed, wept and sung, wept and believed; this was sowing in tears. Is any afflicted? Let him pray; nay, let him sing psalms, let him sing this psalm. Is any afflicted with undutiful disobedient children? David was; and yet that did not hinder his joy in God, nor put him out of tune for holy songs.
- 2. He was now in great danger; the plot against him was laid deep, the party that sought his ruin was very formidable, and his own son at the head of them, so that his affairs seemed to be at the last extremity; yet then he kept hold of his interest in God and improved that. Perils and frights should drive us to God, not drive us from him.
- 3. He had now a great deal of provocation given him by those from whom he had reason to expect better things, from his son, whom he had been indulgent of, from his subjects, whom he had been so great a blessing to; this he could not but resent, and it was enough to break in upon any man's temper; yet he was so far from any indecent expressions of passion and indignation that he had calmness enough for those acts of devotion which require the greatest fixedness and freedom of thought. The sedateness of his mind was evinced by the Spirit's coming upon him; for the Spirit chooses to move upon the still waters. Let no unkindness, no, not of a child or a friend, ever be laid so much to heart as to disfit us for communion with God.
- 4. He was now suffering for his sin in the matter of Uriah; this was the evil which, for that sin, God threatened to raise up against him out of his own house ([2 Sa. 12:11](#)), which, no doubt, he observed, and took occasion thence to renew his repentance for it. Yet he did not therefore cast away his confidence in the divine power and goodness, nor despair of succour. Even our sorrow for sin must not hinder either our joy in God or our hope in God.
- 5. He seemed cowardly in fleeing from Absalom, and quitting his royal city, before he had had one struggle for it; and yet, by this psalm, it appears he was full of true courage arising from his faith in God. True Christian fortitude consists more in a gracious security and serenity of mind, in patiently bearing and patiently waiting, than in daring enterprises with sword in hand.

In these three verses he applies to God. Whither else should we go but to him when any thing grieves us or frightens us? David was now at a distance from his own closet, and from the courts of God's house, where he used to pray; and yet he could find a way open heaven-ward. Wherever we are we may have access to God, and may draw nigh to him whithersoever we are driven. David, in his flight, attends his God,

The Bible Says

Psalm 3:1-2 Meaning

David begins [Psalm 3:1-2](#) with a heading that identifies him in a moment of fear and urgency, revealing the context in which these words were penned: *A Psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son*. Historically, David reigned as king over Israel from around 1010 BC to 970 BC. His son Absalom, consumed by the desire for power, staged a rebellion that forced David to flee from Jerusalem. This setting underscores how David's trust in the LORD was tested during one of the most distressing family crises of his reign.

As he departed Jerusalem, David left behind the royal city, situated in the hill country of Judah. Jerusalem held spiritual and political significance as the capital David established. The descent from the capital into places of hiding and uncertainty must have grieved his heart, given both the threat to his kingdom and the betrayal of his own child. Yet, this heading sets the theme for how adversity can drive one deeper into dependence on God, even when some of those adversaries are from one's own household.

In these words, the text implies David's trust did not waver; even though he was on the run, he sought refuge in God's presence. The mention of *when he fled* highlights a very real human predicament—being hounded by those who wish him harm—and sets the stage for the heartfelt appeal he makes in the following verses.

David's prayer is revealed in his cry: *O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me* (v. 1). Here, the psalmist declares his utter dismay at the sheer number of people who have turned against him. Having once been a celebrated king who united tribes and led a strong nation, David now finds his loyal supporters overshadowed by a growing force of those who seek his downfall. This painful realization underscores humanity's vulnerability and the fragility of earthly security.

The sense of growing hostility often accompanies moments of crisis in our lives. Like David, we can experience a season where trouble multiplies, friends scatter, and uncertainty looms large. Yet, this verse reminds us that when opposition seems overwhelming, the LORD remains the constant refuge. In the face of adversity, biblical examples such as the trials of Jesus—where the crowds turned

against Him leading to the crucifixion ([Luke 23](#))—remind us that the world’s disfavor need not be the final verdict.

In continued desperation, David laments: *Many are saying of my soul, ‘There is no deliverance for him in God.’ Selah* (v. 2). This shows that not only do his enemies multiply, but they also attack him by casting doubt on God’s willingness or ability to rescue him. It implies a slanderous accusation: if God truly favored David, surely he would not be in such peril. In this way, the psalm illustrates how trials can generate both external threats and internal temptations to question divine faithfulness.

David’s plight also reflects an intense spiritual battle. Although the physical pursuit by Absalom’s forces was very real, hearing so many voices proclaiming that there was no deliverance could have driven fear deeply into his soul. Yet, as other passages show, the LORD’s proven faithfulness does not depend on the opinions of skeptics. God delivered David from Goliath ([1 Samuel 17](#)) long before David reigned as king, and He would prove Himself a deliverer again, foreshadowing the ultimate deliverance accomplished by Jesus Christ on the cross ([John 19](#)).

David, facing a national crisis, family conflict, and personal humiliation, still turns to the One he knows as his Redeemer—confident that mocking voices do not negate God’s power to save.

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David Guzik

Study Guide for Psalm 3

PEACE IN THE MIDST OF THE STORM

*This is the first psalm with a title: **A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.** James Montgomery Boice points out that since these titles are in the canonical text of the Hebrew Bible, “They are to be taken with absolute seriousness throughout.” The events are recorded in [2 Samuel 15-18](#), but the heart of David at that difficult time is recorded in this psalm.*

A. David’s trouble and God’s help.

1. ([Psalm 3:1-2](#)) What those who troubled David did.

LORD, how they have increased who trouble me!

Many are they who rise up against me.

Many **are** they who say of me,
“**There is no help for him in God.**” **Selah**

a. **How they have increased who trouble me**: At the writing of this psalm David was in a great deal of trouble. His own son led what seemed to be a successful rebellion against him. Many of his previous friends and associates forsook him and joined the ranks of those who troubled him (2 Samuel 15:13).

b. **There is no help for him in God**: David’s situation was so bad that many felt he was beyond God’s help. Those who said this probably didn’t feel that God was **unable** to help David; they probably felt that God was **unwilling** to help him. They looked at David’s past sin and figured, “This is all what he deserves from God. **There is no help for him in God.**”

i. Shimei was an example of someone who said that God was against David, and he was just getting what he deserved (2 Samuel 16:7-8). This thought was most painful of all for David — the thought that God might be **against him** and that **there is no help for him in God**.

ii. “If all the trials which come from heaven, all the temptations which ascend from hell, and all the crosses which arise from the earth, could be mixed and pressed together, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in **this verse**. It is the most bitter of all afflictions to be led to fear that there is no help for us in God.” (Spurgeon)

c. **Selah**: The idea in the Hebrew for this word (occurring 74 times in the Old Testament) is for a **pause**. Most people think it speaks of a reflective pause, a pause to meditate on the words just spoken. It may also be a musical instruction, for a musical interlude of some kind.

2. (Psalm 3:3-4) What God did for David in the midst of trouble.

But You, O LORD, **are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.
I cried to the LORD with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill. Selah**

a. **You, O LORD, are a shield for me**: Though many said there was no help for him in God, David knew that God was his **shield**. Others — even many others — couldn’t shake David’s confidence in a God of love and help.

i. Under attack from a cunning and ruthless enemy, David needed a **shield**. He knew that God **was** his shield. This wasn’t a prayer asking God to fulfill this; this is a strong declaration of fact: **You, O LORD, are a shield for me**.

b. **My glory and the One who lifts my head**: God was more than David’s protection. He also was the **One** who put David on higher ground, lifting his head and showing him glory. There was nothing glorious or head-lifting in David’s circumstances, but there was in his God.

i. Men find **glory** in all sorts of things — fame, power, prestige, or possessions. David found his **glory** in the LORD. “Oh, my soul, hast thou made God thy glory? Others boast in their

wealth, beauty, position, achievements: dost thou find in God what they find in these?"
(Meyer)

- c. **I cried to the LORD with my voice**: "Surely, silent prayers are heard. Yes, but good men often find that, even in secret, they pray better aloud than they do when they utter no vocal sound." (Spurgeon)
- d. **He heard me from His holy hill**: Others said that God wanted nothing to do with David, but he could gloriously say, "**He heard me**." Though Absalom took over Jerusalem and forced David out of the capitol, David knew that it wasn't Absalom enthroned on God's **holy hill**. The LORD Himself still held that ground and would hear and help David from **His holy hill**.

B. Blessing from and to God.

1. (Psalm 3:5-6) God blesses David.

I lay down and slept;

I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.

I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people

Who have set themselves against me all around.

- a. **I lay down and slept; I awoke**: David used both of these as evidence of God's blessing. **Sleep** was a blessing, because David was under such intense pressure from the circumstances of Absalom's rebellion that sleep might be impossible, but he **slept**. **Waking** was another blessing, because many wondered if David would live to see a new day.

i. "Truly it must have been a soft pillow indeed that could make him forget his danger, who then had such a disloyal army at his back hunting of him." (Gurnall, cited in Spurgeon)

ii. God sustains us in our sleep, but we take it for granted. Think of it: you are asleep, unconscious, dead to the world — yet you breathe, your heart pumps, your organs operate. The same God who sustains us in our sleep will sustain us in our difficulties.

- b. **I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people**: With God sustaining him, David could stand against any foe. Before it was written, David knew the truth of **Romans 8:31**: *If God is for us, who can be against us?*

2. (Psalm 3:7-8) David blesses God.

Arise, O LORD;

Save me, O my God!

For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;

You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Salvation belongs to the LORD.

Your blessing is upon Your people. Selah

- a. **Arise, O LORD.... For You have struck all my enemies**: David's mind was on both what he trusted God to do (**Save me, O my God**) and on what God had done (**struck all my**

enemies...broken the teeth of the ungodly). Knowing what God **had** done gives David confidence in what the LORD **would** do.

b. **Arise, O LORD**: This recalled the words of **Numbers 10:35**, where Moses used this phrase as the children of Israel broke camp in the wilderness. It was a **military** phrase, calling on God to go forth to both defend Israel and lead them to victory.

c. **Broken the teeth of the ungodly**: This vivid metaphor is also used in **Psalms 58:6**. It speaks of the total domination and defeat of the enemy. David looked for protection in this psalm, but more than protection — he looked for **victory**. It wasn't enough for David to survive the threat to the kingdom. He had to be victorious over the threat, and he would be with the blessing of God.

d. **Salvation belongs to the LORD**: David understood that **salvation** — both in the ultimate and immediate sense — was God's property. It isn't the property of any one nation or sect, but of the LORD God. To be saved, one must deal with the LORD Himself.

e. **Your blessing is upon Your people**: This showed David's heart in a time of **personal** calamity. He wasn't only concerned for God's hand upon himself, but upon all God's people. He didn't pray for preservation and victory in the trial with Absalom just for his own sake, but because it was best for the nation.

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Why Pray the Psalms?

“The Psalter is the prayer book of Jesus Christ in the truest sense of the word. He prayed the Psalter and now it has become his prayer for all time...we understand how the Psalter can be prayer to God and yet God's own Word, precisely because here we encounter the praying Christ...because those who pray the psalms are joining in with the prayer of Jesus Christ, their prayer reaches the ears of God. Christ has become their intercessor...” ~

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Praying the Psalms can be a powerful way to connect with God and express a range of emotions and experiences. To begin, choose a Psalm that resonates with you and read it slowly, meditating on the words and what they mean. As you read, try to personalize the Psalm and apply it to your own life. You can also use the Psalm as a springboard for your own prayers, using its words and themes to guide your conversation with God.

The Meaning of Psalm 3:

What do we do when life falls apart? This psalm provides us with an answer to that question. Psalm 3 is a psalm of individual lament, written to provide a clear example of what triumphant faith looks like when it is put to the test. The psalm is attributed to David and is connected to the time when David fled from his son, Absalom.

It teaches us how to reach out to God in times of betrayal, anxiety and overwhelm. Perhaps you're not feeling that way today, but of course you will someday. Praying Psalm 3 can provide a powerful training ground for times like this in your life.

How to pray Psalm 3

Try the following method:

Prayer for Illumination

Father, I thank you for your Word. It is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. Please grant me the grace to receive your truth in faith and love, as well as the strength to follow the path you have laid out for me; in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

Praying using Psalm 3

Using the ACTS model of *Adoration*, *Confession*, *Thanksgiving*, and *Supplication*, read through Psalm 3 and then pray the following:

Adoration

Look for anything in Psalm 3 that tells you what God is like or points to His character and give Him praise.

- “Father, I praise you that you are my salvation” (3:2).
- “Father, I praise you that you are my protector in times of trouble” (3:3).

- “Father, I praise you that you lift me up when I am cast down and you give me hope when I am dismayed” (3:3).
- “Father, I praise you that you always hear me when I cry out to you” (3:4).
- “Father, I praise you that I can rest in you” (3:5)
- “Father, I praise you that you sustain and watch over me” (3:5).
- “Father, I praise you that you deliver me from my fears” (3:6).
- “Father, I praise you that you are just and deliver me from my enemies” (3:6-7).
- “Father, I praise you that my salvation comes from you and you desire to bless your people” (3:8).

A short video with quiet music to use for this adoration time:

Confession

As you acknowledge who God is and adore Him for all that He is, confession is a natural consequence. This is a moment of introspection as you ask God to search your heart for areas that displease Him.

- Confess ways in which you have given into fear and failed to believe God’s promises.
- Confess ways in which you have listened to the lies of the enemy (3:2).
- Confess your tendency to lack faith in God during difficult times. During this time of need, ask God to give you faith.

Thanksgiving

This is a time to express gratitude for what God has done and for who He is. Allow the Scripture you have read to feed your thanksgiving.

- How has God delivered you in the past? Remember those times and thank God for his faithfulness.
- “Father, I thank you that you are my glory and the lifter of my head” (3:3).
- “Father, I thank you that you have me rest over.....”
- “Father, I thank you that you have delivered me from.....”

Supplication

In this moment, pray for yourself and others that you will be able to put into practice what you have read and heard.

- “O Lord, how many are my foes...” Describe your struggle or conflict to God.

- “Many are saying of me...” Describe the criticisms that others, Satan or your own internal critic are judging you with.
- “Arise, O Lord!... Strike all my enemies...” Tell God, the Righteous Judge and your Deliverer, your honest feelings and what you want you want Him to do.
- “From the Lord comes deliverance...” Ask for God’s blessing for you, your loved ones, and even the people troubling you.
- Bring your concerns to God. We can come to Him in the middle of our crisis. What crisis are you facing now you need to bring before God?

Hymn of Reflection

O God, how many are my fears! How fast my foes increase! Conspiring my eternal death, they try to break my peace. I cry, and from your holy hill you bow a listening ear; I call on you, my Lord and God, and you subdue my fear.

You give soft slumbers to my eyes, in spite of all my foes; I wake, and wonder at the grace which guarded my repose. What though the hosts of death and hell, all armed, against me stood! Such foes shall shake my soul no more; my refuge is in God.

Arise, O Lord! Fulfill your grace! It moves my heart to sing! My God will break the serpent's teeth, and death has lost its sting. Salvation is from you, O God; your arm alone will save; your blessings will attend us here and reach beyond the grave.

(Lyrics by Isaac Watts)

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, we confess to you that there are many aspects of our lives and of our world that confuse and even anger us. There is no doubt in our minds that you remain in control and that all things are working together for our ultimate benefit and your glory, but on some days, circumstances get the better of us. Please help us to be more open and honest with you and with others, and to increase our faith so that we are able to trust you and live without fear. We pray in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen.

A Benediction:

Thanks to Rev. Travis Johnson for writing this prayer guide.